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9th Annual C.O.C.A. Convention Bloomington, Minnesota



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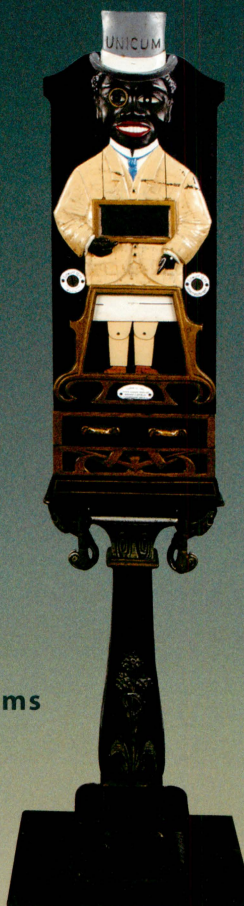
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Message from Our President....

Hello again! Thanks to all of our members that helped to make our Minnesota Convention a huge success. Our convention chairperson, Marsha Blau, with the help of our Minnesota hosts, Larry and Ryan Gustafson, once again did a fantastic job of planning a great coin-op event. With seven great collections to view, room to room selling, a lively auction, plenty of good food to keep everyone going, and some time to unwind on a scenic Mississippi River dinner cruise, the Minnesota convention was a fun experience for all who attended. By moving the convention to a different part of the country each year, we've made the conventions more accessible to members in those areas and viewed many of the best collections in the country. Next year's convention will be held in Boston, Massachusetts. This will be C.O.C.A.'s tenth annual convention, and once again, it promises to be memorable. There are still a few details to work out, but planning is going well, and with contracts in place for the hotel, restaurants, a Boston Harbor dinner cruise, and significant collections available for viewing, I'm looking forward to another great convention. Hope to see you all in Boston!

I'm happy to report that our membership numbers are growing rapidly. Since the first of this year, we've been more aggressive in marketing the club through advertising in national publications, with flyers being placed at major coin-op auctions and shows, and our efforts are paying off. So far this year, we've gained 85 members and are continuing to gain new members almost every week. With more than 700 members currently in the club, we have almost 50 more members than we had at this time last year.

Have you seen our new e-newsletter? A few months ago, we launched C.O.C.A. TIDBITS, a monthly email newsletter designed to highlight announcements, new articles, and the coin-op events calendar maintained on our website. Bill Petrochuk has done a great job of making sure our website content is current and announcements are posted regularly, but many of us never see them since we don't visit the website frequently.

Whether it's a new article, an announcement or update about an upcoming C.O.C.A. event, or a new ad in our FREE CLASSIFIEDS, something on the website changes almost daily. Our recent Ad Contest brought us 113 new ads between June 1st and August 31st, so if you're not checking the FREE CLASSIFIEDS regularly, you may be missing out on an opportunity to buy a great machine you've been searching for. Getting news and updates out to our members has always been challenging, but now C.O.C.A. TIDBITS should be that gentle reminder that we haven't looked at the website in a few weeks. If you haven't seen C.O.C.A. TIDBITS in your inbox yet, we may not have a current email address on file for you. Updated email addresses should be sent to President@coinopclub.org.

Our next meeting will be held Thursday, November 8, 2012, at The Hilton Garden Inn, St. Charles, IL. For dinner reservations, contact Cindy Champer at CindyChamper@aol.com or by phone at 419-350-0477. Please make reservations for dinner by November 1st so that we can get an accurate count to the hotel. The meeting will feature both a live auction and a silent auction. For members with machines or other coin-op related items to sell, the silent auction will be available, but since we expect a large number of items, please limit your number of items to three per member. The live auction will feature donated items and COCA Logo items, all selling with no reserve. For more information on the auction, contact me at President@coinopclub.org.

See you in Chicago!

Doug Cain
COCA President
330.837.2265
president@coinopclub.org



DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE: January 5, 2013

COCA Members Meet in Bloomington MN for The 9th Annual National Convention

by Bill Petrochuk

The weather was perfect on the third weekend in August when about 100 coin-op enthusiasts met for the ninth summer in a row.

Many came in early on Thursday, and were treated to an early bird "Famous Dave's" BBQ hosted by Ryan Gustafson and Deb Peterson along with Larry and Mary Gustafson. The evening event was held at Ryan's lakeside home, where members also checked out his collection of machines that includes a rare Watling Liberty Bell.

Friday morning began with a complimentary buffet breakfast at the host Hilton Hotel. The rest of the group arrived during the day and were welcomed at the registration desk by Marsha and David Blau. Marsha continues to do a superlative job as convention planning and operations chairwoman.

That afternoon everyone went to an open house at the home of Larry and Mary Gustafson. Larry has a great collection of trade stimulators, countertop games and many other cool coin-ops.

Upon returning to the Hilton, members roamed the halls looking to find new goodies during room to room trading.

That evening, a banquet dinner with cash bar was held in the ballroom. It was followed by an auction of 85 lots that members consigned. COCA member Jeff Scott called the bids while John Fifer and Mark Heston served as ring men.

There were three collections viewed on Saturday. Duane and Pat Bakke, have a world-class collection



consisting of vending machines, numerous slot machines, trade stimulators, gambling memorabilia, toys, pin-up art, exceptional advertising and penny scales. WOW is the best word to describe this eye candy.

Touring the collection of Larry and Linda Bieza, whose entire home and garage are filled with a fun assortment of coin-op, including arcade machines, countertop games and pinball machines, is truly like taking a trip back in time to the penny arcade that most of us remember from our youth.

Rob and Julie Lahemmer, have almost every known basketball themed coin-op device ever made. Their collection also includes many other sports-themed games, including examples of baseball, hockey, bowling and football. Along with his coin-op collection Rob has a museum on the history of basketball. As was the case at the Bieza's, these machines got a thorough work out.

Everyone met at lunch time for an Italian feast at Buca Di Beppo. This eatery is famous for their delicious large family style portions.

After a nice late afternoon break at the Hilton everyone boarded the complimentary buses that took us into St. Paul for a dinner cruise on a Riverboat down the Mississippi. We glided down the river as the sun set and then returned to see the downtown lights of St. Paul's bustling harbor.

As we dined on beef tenderloin and cruised along, we were entertained by the sounds of The Mississippi Minstrels Dixieland Band. Joining them was Kathryn

Falk, Ken Rubin's lovely wife. She volunteered to be guest soloist, serenading all aboard.

On Sunday, the group toured three more collections. Kilroy's, owned and operated by Kevin Hammerbeck, is a retail game room store that also includes his personal collection of all types of coin-operated items, as well as gambling collectibles, advertising, automobilia and diner memorabilia.

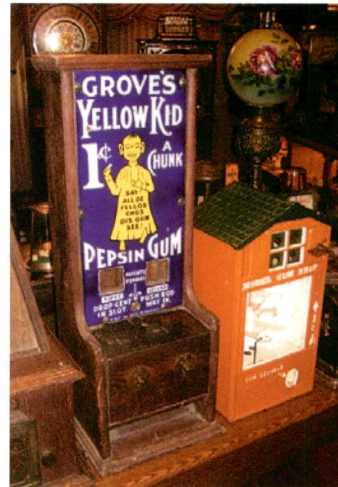
Skyrock Farm, houses the collection of Bill and Stacy Nunn. They also offer horse riding and training lessons. Members were able to tour the horse barn and see over 40 horses and watch a horse jumping demonstration. Many chose to take a ride on a vintage amusement park train that traveled around the property.

Everyone listened to the happiest music on earth provided by the many antique automatic band and dance organs as they strolled through the carousel building and turn of the century ballroom.

The final stop was a return to the home of Ryan Gustafson, who also hosted the Thursday BBQ. All in attendance are grateful to everyone that opened their homes for touring and especially to Larry, Mary and Ryan Gustafson who chaired the event and to Marsha

Blau for planning, coordinating and directing a very successful convention

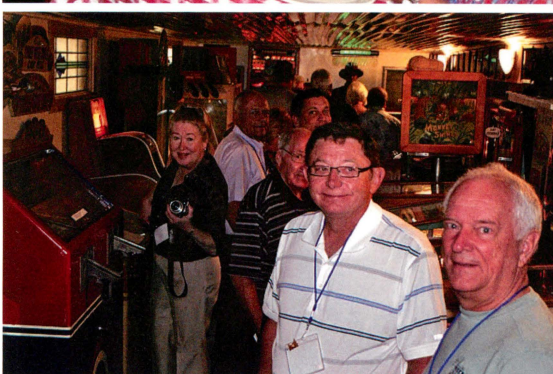
Marsha is currently busy planning the next Annual COCA Convention to be held in Historic Boston Mass. The chosen date is August 23-25, 2013. She promises to make this Tenth Anniversary Convention our most fantastic gala event ever! It will include a tour of the Chase home (the 5th largest private residence in the U.S.) and several important collections. Mark the date and make your plans now to see this most historic city.





2012 Convention





OBSERVATIONS AND SPECULATION

By Jack Freund

I attended the Mel and Anne Getlan auction, conducted by Victorian Casino Antiques Auction Company, May 4, 5 and 6, 2012. This was one of three great auctions that I have witnessed over the last 35 years, the other two being the Dr. Smith auction in 1994 and the Stan Harris auction in 1995. There have been many other fine auctions over the years, but these three auctions had so many important coin operated collectables that they just stand out from all the others.

I attended the auction preview on Thursday and was amazed at the number of machines and the quality of them. As I browsed thru the maze of items I came upon Lot 758, the 1 cent Mills Novelty "Mills Peanut Vendor", circa 1908 (Fig 3).

First, a little history about the Mills Peanut Vendor. It is really a Faust Maier with a Mills tag on the front. Faust Maier Co., Milwaukee, WI, came out with their peanut machine in 1908 (Fig 1). Mills had machines that vended tab gum, chocolate and matches, but no peanut vendor. It is unknown to me if Mills bought the rights to the Faust Maier or bought the entire company, but now, in 1908, they had a peanut vendor, their first machine with a glass globe (Fig 2). Also, see the ad for their "Glass Globe Machine" (Fig 6). While it was a good looking machine, with a large bulbous globe, it was almost impossible to put peanuts into it. It had no opening at the top of the globe! It had to be turned upside down and filled from the bottom! Look at Fig. 2 and try to imagine balancing the machine while filling it upside down. I'm sure many globes were broken.

OK, back to the auction. As I inspected the Mills Peanut Vendor I suddenly realized that it did not have the Faust Maier globe. Instead, it had the same globe as the Mills Little Perfection peanut machine of 1912! (See Fig 5). It appears to have been factory installed and solved the problem of getting peanuts into the machine.

I had to have it!! I said nothing to anyone about the machine for fear of someone else getting as excited as I was. On Friday I became the new owner of the very exciting Mills Peanut Vendor with "Improved Globe".

A week or two after the auction, I was looking thru SILENT SALESMEN TOO, by the late Bill Enes. I came upon the CAILLE PERFECT VENDOR of 1909 (See Fig 4). It is VERY similar to the MILLS PEANUT VENDOR, with a square body, (cast iron vs. stamped metal), water spigot handle and a globe similar to the Mills machine. It looks as if Caille copied Mills, but in a much fancier version. Caille is given credit for introducing the Perfect Vendors and the SUNBURST in 1909.

Then I checked the MILLS LITTLE PERFECTION for information. Interestingly, Bill Enes thought that maybe Mills copied Caille, as the Little Perfection had a pivotal lid, boxy base, side mechanism and a cup for the peanuts to fall into (basically, the same features the Mills Peanut Vendor had in 1908). Maybe, after Caille appeared successful with their Perfect Vendors, Mills felt it necessary to upgrade their peanut vendor to a more fancy version, the 1912 MILLS LITTLE PERFECTION (Fig 5).

I failed to mention earlier that the 1908 MILLS PEANUT VENDOR had a wooden vending mechanism. So did the 1912 MILLS LITTLE PERFECTION. It also retained the same globe as the 1908 improved version. It seems that Mills upgraded the 1908 machine to be competitive with the Caille 1909 machines.

So here is the speculation.....Faust Maier was first (Fig 1), Mills Peanut Vendor was second (Fig 2), Improved Mills Peanut Vendor was third (Fig 3), Caille Perfect Vendors were fourth (Fig 4) but copied the Mills, Mills Little Perfection was Fifth (Fig 5) but copied the ornate look of the Cailles.

Is this a great hobby or what?

Thanks to Ken Rubin and Paul Hindin for helping with some of the photos used in this article.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

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CHUCK-O-LUCK DICE

by Bill Howard



The 1930 Whirlwind spin games came upon the coin machine market like a storm. Many manufacturers offered countless sports, social, and other categories of formats to the public through these countertop amusement machines. The pioneering influence of the older and rarer Wildcat trade stimulator on this Whirlwind phenomenon has been discussed in my book, *Every Picture Tells a Story*, see page 129.

The Chuck-O-Luck Machine is made better and is much rarer, but works much like the more drab and common Whirlwinds. Made by both Keeney and Sons of Chicago and D. Gottlieb and Co. of Chicago, Chuck-O-Luck came on the market in 1931 and appeared on the November Cover of *Automatic Age*. The cabinet is made of wood, is painted red and has no marquis. The front aluminum casting has red crackle paint and accommodates five different play interiors: poker, black jack, horse racing, football and dice. The only difference in the five types of Chuck-O-Lucks is the background motif of each of the five varieties. Each version, however, sports the tell-tale pronouncement that the machine was legal and should not be used for gambling. No gum ball option was offered. Most assuredly, however, all varieties were used as gambling devices, and, in my opinion, for gambling purposes only, unlike the contemporary Whirlwind amusement machines to be played with one player in mind.

The Chuck-O-Lucks were marketed as “five machines for the price of one” that “requires but one minute to change fronts” to switch to another of the five machine formats. It was serviced and accessed via a simple lock on the lower

front aluminum casting, just as was the case with the Whirlwinds. No cash box was provided, as the obvious theme of the Chuck-O-Luck was to compete among different players, not the machine itself or the “operator.” The machine is simply served as a vehicle for competing players to gamble at a cost of one cent. The interior casting that accommodates the spin action is very similar to a much more common contemporary Whirlwind-type machine called Barnyard Golf.

What is puzzling to me about the Chuck-O-Luck is why, in spite of the quality of its construction, its classy look and affordable \$12.50 price in the midst of the Depression, it is such a rare machine today. Though listed as a machine made by both Keeney and Gottlieb by historian Dick Bueschel, in his trade stimulator book, no picture or example appears either in that source book or in Tom Gustweller’s *For Amusement Only*. Indeed, I cannot locate it in any source book except in Ken Rubin’s *Drop Coin Here*, see page 85. This is only the third Chuck-O-Luck I am aware of, the first being in the Mel Getlin collection, and the second, a football variety, having been offered a few years back in Chicagoland by dealer Jack Freund. The only explanation I can suggest is that, as the Chuck-O-Luck was such an obvious gambling machine, and no gambler gambles alone, this machine did not appeal as an amusement machine for one cent as the Whirlwinds did, but only to gamblers who wished to play against one another. I do not believe such competition machines, strictly to be played by two or more people, ever did that well in the market.

It is for this reason that I was so excited to acquire the Dice Chuck-O-Luck, which has to be the rarest of the rare Chuck-O-Lucks. Like the *African Golf* machine discussed in my March, 2003, C.O.C.A. magazine article and featured on page 155 of *Every Picture Tells a Story*, it makes no sense to play Dice Chuck-O-Luck by yourself. The machine is no more than a vehicle to play dice without actually rolling dice. In the case of African Golf, two balls are propelled into one of six pockets showing dice sides 1-6, just as if the player was throwing craps, in effect 5 “throws” for one cent. With Dice Chuck-O-Luck, there are more pockets and combinations within those pockets so that the craps “thrower” gets the same effect with only one ball being propelled at a price of 10 “throws” for one cent. African Golf and Dice Chuck-O-Luck both came out in 1931 in competition with one another, and one person does not play craps by himself.

Just like African Golf, the Dicer Chuck-O-Luck is incredibly politically incorrect because of its colorful and involved graphics that are much richer than the other Chuck-O-Luck varieties. Only one African Golf is currently in captivity, and I would be surprised if many more Dice Chuck-O-Lucks turn up. The graphics and rarity of the Dicer probably doubles its value relative to the other Chuck-O-Luck varieties.



Pick-A-Pack Machine



Indian Dice Machine

Larceny or Legally?

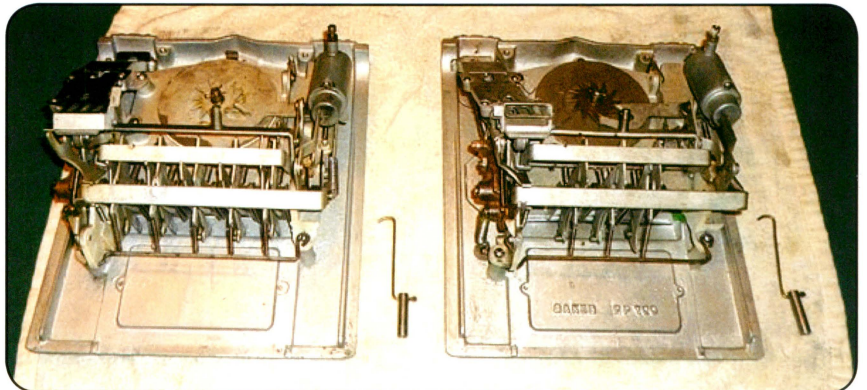
by Dan Applegate

There is a decades old question of whether or not one manufacturer stole the idea and concept of a trade stimulator from another mfg. back in the late 30s. The answer will be explained after I have stated how both machines, The Indian Dice and Pick-A-Pack, were acquired.

The Pick-A-Pack machine was acquired in an antique shop in Hot Springs, Arkansas, and the Indian Dice machine through a contact made at the Chicagoland Game Room Show that lead to a contact in Kentucky. On acquiring the Pick-A-Pack machine, I was able to negotiate a price with the dealer. On acquiring The Indian Dice machine, my wife and I attended the March/April Chicagoland Game Room Show. We both were looking for this machine at the parking lot sales and both exhibit halls at Pheasant Run. After asking many dealers, I came to a booth where a gentleman named Marcus Axiotis informed me that a friend of his had this machine for sell. Marcus was able to contact his friend, who contacted me and we made a deal. I had been searching for over 30 years for these two machines. I was thrilled to acquire both of these machines within a very short time. Never quit looking, including antique shops, Chicagoland Show, and even running ads in the C.O.C.A. Times.

Now comes the fun part! By looking at the comparisons of both machines you can see how closely they resemble one another and that the

mechanism is identical with the exception that one machine had parts and levers for 5 columns and the other for 3 columns; both machines had a tilt mechanism located in the top of the machine; The Indian Dice had a larger view area. Both machines had a last-coin display window on the back door, and a cast aluminum front with wood case. In 1938, the D. Gottlieb Co. designed and built a very clever counter machine named "The Indian Dice". It had 5 columns that held regular spot dice and had a disk in the back of the middle column that displayed the house odds. The game had "hold-and-draw" features. The object of the game was to beat the house odds. This game operated on 1 cent thru 25 cents. Operation of game went as follows: Insert coin of choice; pull handle which would spin the house-odds disk that would be displayed in the triangular window located behind the center column, and at the same time the dice would be popped up in the columns and come to rest. To hold the dice that you

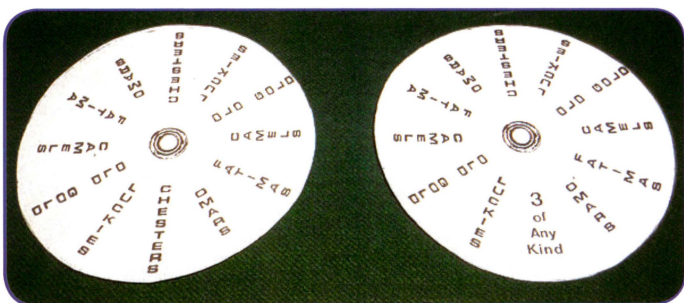


wanted to keep, push levers in. To activate the draw feature, pull small lever next to the word "DRAW" and the dice that were not held would be re-popped. The Aces were wild, so the player had a good chance to match either the dice number or an Ace to better their hand.

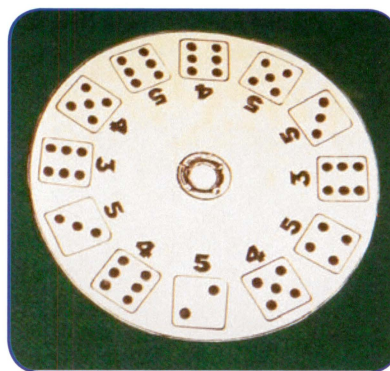
In 1939, Baker Novelty and Mfg. Co., of Chicago, came out with a machine named "Pick-A-Pack" that was identical to The Indian Dice machine but instead of 5 dice this machine had 3 dice that had cigarette packs etched on each side of



the dice of a nationally known brand. The machine I acquired did not have the correct dice so I made my own by using IMP reel strips from Slot Dynasty; I later added the correct set of dice. The two end columns were filled in to create a 3 column machine. It also had a triangular window behind the middle column that displayed the names of the cigarettes. In order for the name of the cigarettes to be fully displayed in the window, some names were shortened, ex. Lucky Strike became "Luckies"; Chesterfield became "Chesters". The disk originally had 12 characters, 2 of each brand name. That was changed in the later models to: 1 of the Chesters was replaced with the words "3 of Any Kind" to make it easier to win. This machine operated on penny only. Operation was identical. Insert penny; pull handle, the middle disk would spin, and



the 3 dice would be popped. Then the player would look at the window located in the middle column to see what brand was to be matched. The player then held dice that matched brand in window by pushing in lever or levers, and then activating the "DRAW" feature by pulling small lever located next to the word DRAW. By having to match the name brand that was displayed in the window, it made winning a pack very hard to do. So Baker added the "3 of Any Kind" to



improve the odds for the player. For decades it was believed that Baker Novelty stole the idea for their machine from D. Gottlieb, but the fact of the matter is Gottlieb did not do their homework when it came to the odds of their new The Indian

Dice machine. The Aces were wild which meant that every die had a wild card on them which made it easier to match one of the numbers on the dice, in other words, they had 2 chances out of 6 or 3-to-1 odds of matching the dice needed for a good hand. It would be like a deck of 52 cards having 12 wild cards. Can you imagine how many good hands would be dealt to players in a poker game? It would create havoc! Along with having Aces wild, the player could vary their choice of wager which would pay anywhere from 2 to 20-to-1 odds. To add insult to injury, the award card was confusing; it did not state whether a Full House would beat any 3 of a Kind which would cause a problem with payouts.

After many hours of research playing both machines, I would constantly find myself a winner playing The Indian Dice machine because on many chances I would have the odds advantage. On the Pick-A-Pack machine, your odds are initially 36-to-1 to win a hand with 216 different combinations (6x6x6). These are the odds for the later models that had the "3 of Any Kind" located on the disk. The odds of getting 3 of a Kind to match what was on the disk of the earlier machines would be even higher odds which would make the operator very profitable, just the opposite with The Indian Dice which was not favorable for profit. My conclusion is that Baker Novelty did not steal the idea or concept for their machine from Gottlieb, but that Gottlieb sold the rights of the machine and its mechanism to Baker Novelty. At the time, Baker had the rights to revamp other mfg.'s games, like "PACES RACES", into their own machine named "BAKERS PACERS". Baker was getting out of making the big console machines and getting into the counter machines. Along with the fact that D. Gottlieb and Co. had used in their ads the slogan that they did not mfg. gambling machines. They were getting into mfg. pinball machines which were more profitable. It is a shame that these two machines are rare because they are both fun to play. The Indian Dice is much rarer because it had a very limited production.

If you have any new information regarding these two machines, please reply via email to dappledman@yahoo.com.



North American Scale Co. 1909

by Jim & Merlyn Collings

This is a gorgeous tri-colored cast iron scale. (Photo 1) The scale stands 67" tall and is only 13" wide.

The fancy black trim highlights the top of the orange marquee. (Photo 2) The marquee is embossed with the words: "ONE CENT" "POSITIVE WEIGHT" The coin entry is under the word "CENT" on the marquee. On the head of the scale the fancy bezel is painted black. The hard card stock face has printed on it the words: "STAND STILL", Patent Dates starting in 1903 to 1909, "ADJUSTED BY U.S. STANDARD WEIGHT", "THE NORTH AMERICAN SCALE CO. BOSTON, MASS." Under the head, above the column are the embossed words "YOUR WEIGHT ONE PENNY".

An earlier North American scale with a patent date of 1903 also had a paper face. It had a reward card on it that said: "\$50.00 FOR ANYONE DAMAGING THIS MACHINE".

(Photo 3) is a side view of the North American scale showing the 3 colors with a painted satin finish. Originally the scale was probably silver. An operator in Rhode Island had this scale. The orange fluted or ribbed round column is 27-1/2" in length. At the base of the rest of the column is a rectangular portion, housing the cash box. This portion is red and orange with a fancy black trim.

The attractive red and black foot plate has the words: "THE NORTH AMERICAN SCALE CO." Nicely embossed on it (Photo 4).

The North American Scale Co. also manufactured the Showcase Scales in 1909. Please refer to our article in the C.O.C.A. Times, Vol. 9, March 2008.

We affectionately call this striking scale our "Halloween" scale.

HAPPY SCALE COLLECTING!

Our thanks again go out to Jeff Storck for all his help.



Photo 1
Full Length

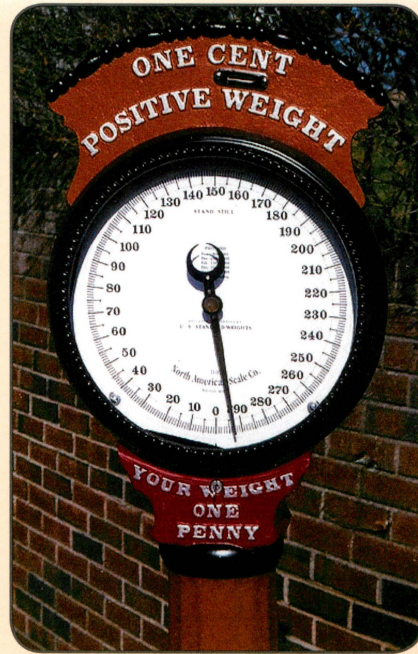


Photo 2
Marquee & Face



Photo 4
Foot Plate



Photo 3
Side View



The Caille Black Cat

by Johnny Duckworth

Caille produced hundreds of machines daily in their plant with a quarter of a million feet of floor space and a payroll of 450 hands. The factory had machinery and facilities which performed all sorts of tasks from one end to the other; they had their own foundry, cabinet shop, and plating area just to name a few. They also hired some of the finest European and American craftsman available. For example, their engraver who worked in the plant making dies for checks and metal tokens had to be checked on regularly by a United States Treasury official because he was considered equal in expertness of any engraver for the government. It's not hard to see today that Caille's success was certainly due to the unbelievable workmanship which was at the highest level in the industry. They also produced some of the finest examples of Victorian art that you will find in a gambling machine.

One of my all-time favorite machines was produced by none other than the Caille Company from Detroit, known as the "Black Cat". It

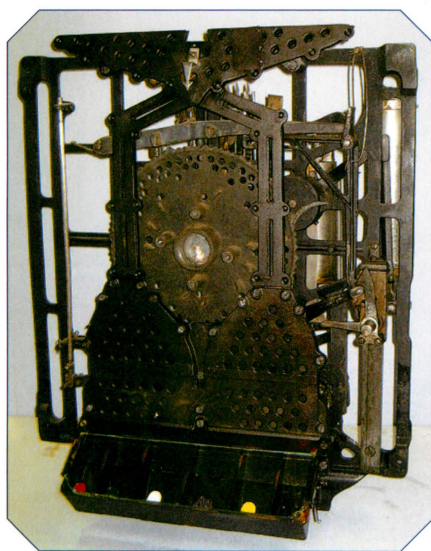
was advertised by Caille to be "the most magnificent slot machine ever made", and if you were an operator at that time, this floor machine would have made you sit up in your chair since it was one of the most expensive single models Caille produced. Shown in several catalogs, it would sell for as high as \$180 dollars for the nickel version but it also came in the quarter and half dollar play as well. You could tack on another \$25 dollars when adding a Swiss music box in hopes of legalizing the machine in your area. It's estimated that only a dozen of these machines still exist today which could also be in result from the higher cost. No half dollar machines have ever surfaced and I am only aware of two quarter machines. The machines were advertised in the quartered oak and mahogany cabinets, and one is actually known in the green cabinet as well. In those days you could sell a machine as having a mahogany cabinet when actually it was made from birch and finished with a mahogany stain. It was a much gentler time.





but with the black cat you would only have the colors to coordinate with the pockets below. If you hit a color played you could only win the amount of coins currently in that corresponding pocket. The pockets could hold as much as \$10 dollars depending on the denomination and if you hit a winning color, the coins would then rattle and fall into the ornate pay cups cast into each side of the front casting. The six pockets were split in half, so depending on which side the color was located dictated on which side your winnings would fall.

The mechanism is designed like no other, designed where a majority of coins played will randomly fall into the center pockets which ultimately are the harder colors to hit since they have fewer color spaces on the wheel.

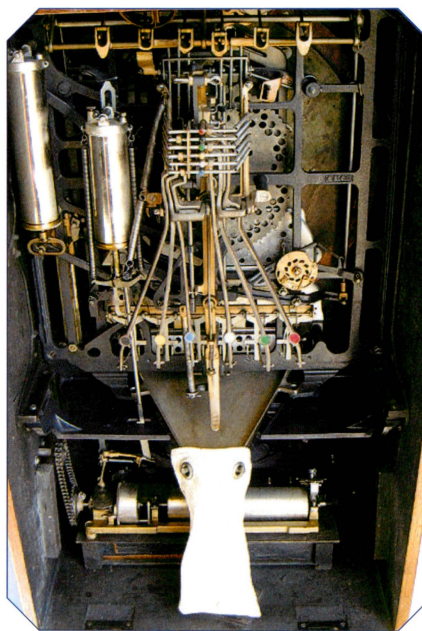
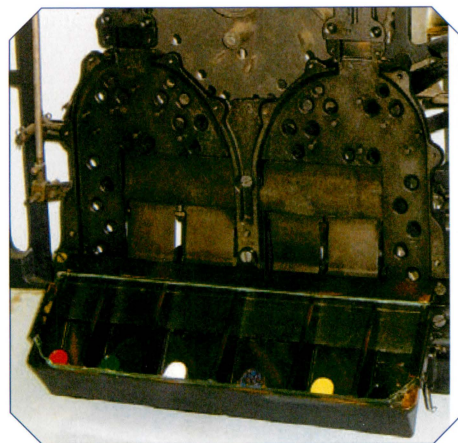


The outside pockets are red and black which are always the easiest colors to hit on a floor machine since they hold the majority of spaces on the wheel. The dividing of the coins is performed in a very simple manner due to a pin field located behind the color wheel where a series of pins make it more difficult for the coins to reach

the outside pockets. The mechanism also has four internal flaps which can be adjusted to determine how many coins will even fall into the center pockets instead of that hungry cash box below. The wheel has 96 total spaces and there are generally several large pockets filled in the center so this machine saw continuous play. Originally it had 12 beveled glue chipped mirrors on the center wheel just as you will observe on the early puck models but they were later produced with the name black cat draped

across the front and boasting a picture of the black cat in the center.

The machine does have something very interesting which you won't find with the others. Imagine placing your bet on a color, then hitting that color, only to win nothing and lose your bet. This could happen very easily if the player didn't first look to see what was currently in the pockets below before placing a bet. An empty pocket is not uncommon and the pockets can be slow to fill after a winner due to the random coin drop. This machine would have also been in direct competition with the Duplex made by the Mills Novelty Company at that time.



Ever since entering the hobby, I've wanted one of these rare and prestigious machines. I was told by some of the old timers to be patient and one would turn up but that was hot air to me since it never seemed to happen. The problem is that most of these rare old floor machines tend to find collectors who don't want to part with them. It took me quite some

time to acquire a Black Cat and I had almost given up hope. I was very fortunate to have a good friend in Ohio who found some pity on me and I was able to make a trade with another great floor machine along with a pocket full of money. Here are the serial numbers that I have been able to track down for the Caille Black Cat 199, 346, 554, 579, 594, 651, 658, & 702. If you have any information or serial numbers you would like to share please contact me at johnny@kccoinop.com or 816-835-3316. Thanks.



Consignments Wanted

For Our Fall 2012 Advertising, Toy & Doll Auction

Julia's recent toy, doll & advertising auction hit just above the million dollar mark against a pre-auction estimate of items sold of approximately \$750,000. Results were a clear indication that buyer optimism is up, especially for fresh to the market quality goods that are conservatively estimated. The auction boasted a stellar offering that ranged from early American tin horse drawn pieces to clockwork automotive toys, pedal cars, fine French & German dolls, antique advertising, coin-op, salesman samples, music machines, and much more. For approximately 40 years, Julia's has established and maintained a sterling reputation for honest and fair dealing, elegant presentation of quality goods, strong and sometimes record prices, and the most competitive commission rates in the industry. We are now accepting quality consignments for our fall Toy & Doll auction. If you are looking for the greatest net return, whether you have one item or an entire collection, please contact us today for a free, no-obligation consultation. Below are some results from previous auctions.



Rock-Ola 1937 World Series
Baseball game (est. \$35-40,000)
SOLD \$42,550



Caille Double slot w/ music
(est. \$45-65,000)
SOLD \$80,500



Multiphone coin-
operated cylinder
phonograph
SOLD \$63,250



Encore coin-op
automated banjo
(est. \$50-75,000)
SOLD \$54,625



Regina upright auto disc
changer (est. \$23-25,000)
SOLD \$25,875



Regina coin-op music box w/
gum vendor (est. \$9-11,000)
SOLD \$9,775



Sweepstakes horse race
game (est. \$1,800-2,200)
SOLD \$4,600



Mills Brownie slot
(est. \$7-9,000)
SOLD \$9,775



Sun Mfg. Co. Bicycle trade
stimulator (est. \$5,500-6,500)
SOLD \$9,200



Mills perfume machine
(est. \$5-8,000)
SOLD \$9,200



Regina Hexaphone
coin-op
phonograph
SOLD \$8,850



Champion
gum vendor
SOLD \$4,600



Mills shock
machine
(est. \$16-18,000)
SOLD \$17,250



Yellow Kid
gum vendor
(est. \$5-10,000)
SOLD \$12,075



Lukat gambling machine
(est. \$15-20,000)
SOLD \$22,425



Bally Reliance dice game
(est. \$12-15,000)
SOLD \$16,100



Mills Baseball
slot machine
(est. \$5,500-7,500)
SOLD \$9,200

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Seller's commission
on expensive items

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Admission: \$7.00

STEREO **Sunday, Nov. 11, 2012** HITS

9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Admission: \$7.00

STEREO **Friday, Nov. 9, 2012** HITS

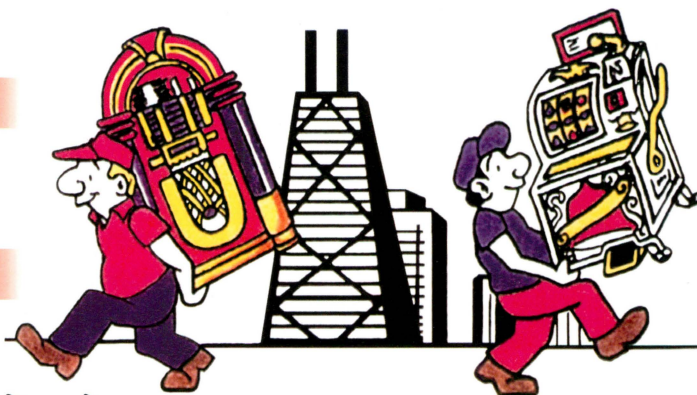
7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Dealer Preview: \$50.00

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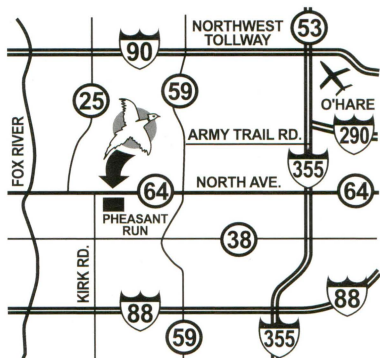


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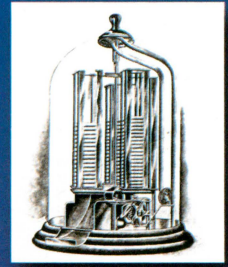
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What's in a Name?



Roger Smith

The Man with a Hoe

Collectors of coin-operated devices occasionally face the conundrum of establishing the maker of an unusual machine. While common in eBay listings (who hasn't seen a 'Harley-Davidson' vendor for sale?), the problem can affect even experienced collectors when an unusual machine or variant surfaces with strange markings or cryptic labels. Some puzzles can be solved by consulting references supplied by Bill Enes, Dick Bueschel and others. Some are made easy by the degree of similarity to well known lines made by large manufacturers. (A prime example is the private label Jay Walton Blount machine made by Columbus Manufacturing for an Akron, Ohio distributor.) Others are more difficult, but unraveling the story can give fascinating glimpses into an era when there many more chewing gum and vending manufacturers than exist today.

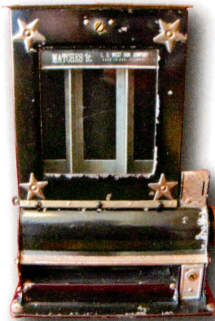
The LE West Vendors

In the fall of 1983, a glass domed vendor surfaced that carried the label "LE West..." The rare machine looked like other rare machines that carried the labels "Buffalo" and "Somerville," but the LE West carried the claim of "patents allowed" suggesting a level of ownership (or manufacture). An "LE West" 3-column match vendor found in 1994, further advances the



impression that LE West was a manufacturer of coin-operated devices.

Because there are a moderate number of these match vendors well attributed to the Griswold Manufacturing Company, of Rock Island, Illinois, we know that the LE West Gum Company (also of Rock Island, Illinois) markings were nothing more than a private label. Similarly, extensive research indicates that the glass-domed wonder was a possibly one-of-a-kind version of the rare Gem vendor made by the R.J. White Vending Company of Chicago, Illinois. (See "The Real Gem: The story of the Buffalo vendor and its maker," *C.O.C.A. Times* 9(1):22-28, 2008.) If that is the case, who was LE West and the gum company that carried his name?



The LE West Gum Company

Born in April 1854, Lewis E. West began what would be a lifetime of travel with an October 1871 train excursion to Chicago to see the ruins of the great Chicago fire. Two years later, West invested \$175 and became partner in Epstein & West, dealers in pianos, organs and sheet music in the Star block on Second Avenue of Rock Island, Illinois, beginning a life-long involvement with music, publishing and pianos. Always the inveterate traveler and salesman, in 1878, West made his first sales trip to Denver by covered wagon, crossing Kansas just two weeks before the Sappe Creek massacre of settlers on the Kansas prairie (a reprisal for an 1875 killing of Cheyenne Indians).

In the mid 1880s, while in his early 30s, LE West moved to a house on the northeast corner of Eleventh Street and Second Avenue (1103 Second Avenue) in Rock Island, Illinois. An 1857 map of the city shows a building on the corner of what was then called Illinois and Swan Streets (the names were changed in 1876), which may represent this house. Its Italianate architecture was the most popular style of the 1850s, characterized by a low hipped roof, emphatic eaves supported by corbels (absent here) and simple functionality. Though this home was

frame rather than the brick that was used so frequently in Rock Island for Italianate homes, Illinois Street was a premier location, and other homes in the area were much more ostentatious than the West's home.



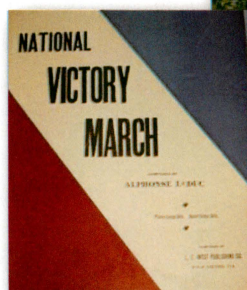
LE West's home ca 1907

The first owner of what would become LE West's home, for whom we have any information, is Major General William Hoffman and his wife. Hoffman was military through and through: Son of a West Point graduate, and a West Point graduate himself, Major General Hoffman had four brothers who were all army officers and his sisters married army officers as well. After serving in the Blackhawk, Mexican, and Civil Wars, he retired to Rock Island in 1870, possibly because his wife was a member of the prominent local Buford family. Hoffman died in 1884 at the age of 76, but his wife remained in the house for another few years before it was sold to Mr. West. It was in this house, in 1891, that West's daughter, Ruth was born.

By 1888, LE West had begun his own publishing company writing and publishing sheet music, and books such as *Carving a Name*, by Horatio Alger, Jr. Always known as "LE," West was an entrepreneur's entrepreneur. West's early advertisements in city directories don't mention chewing gum, but rather cigars, coffee, baking powder, and advertising items – a diverse mix to say the least. Though music appears in later advertising for the various LE West chewing gums, the first mention of chewing gum seems to come in 1897 on the back of sheet music published by the LE West Publishing Company. The ad offered discounts for consumers who sent in gum wrappers from "West's Celebrated Gum."



Some of the titles copyrighted by, or attributed to, Mr. West include "Father is at the Wheel," "Yon Yonson's Wedding," "Bye-lo, Bye-lo, My Baby," "Bridal Bells Waltz" (1897), "Christ-

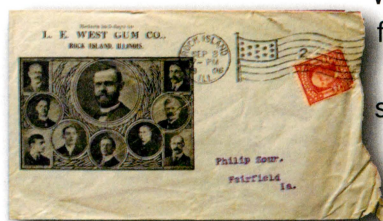
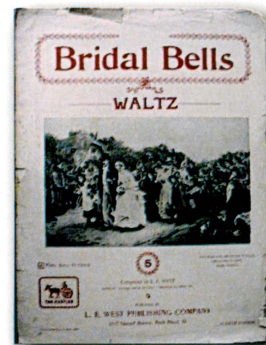


mas Bells," "Cyclone March and Two-step" (1898), "Big Four Two-step," and "The Foresters Grand March" (1899), dedicated to the Modern Woodmen of America.

The Hustler

Self-styled as "the Hustler,"

West operated a factory at 1510-12 Second Avenue (next door to the old post office). An early postcard shows the factory building, covered with a 3-story painted sign saying, "Chew Black Joe and White Sue Cream Gum." The Office of Illinois Secretary of State, in 1901 listed the LE West Company as having \$30,000 in capital stock – over \$775,000 in today's funds. By 1902, an Illinois Department of Factory Inspection report, disclosed that there were 20 employees – 15 men, 5 women at the LE West gum factory.

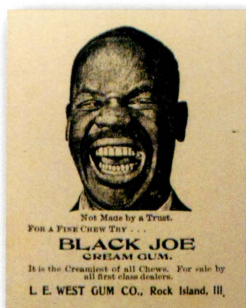


LE West was always the salesman, always looking for a gimmick or an angle. Occasionally, this got him into trouble. In 1909, the Annual report of the Illinois Food Commissioner reported on the wave of illegal baking power being placed on the market. (It was cheap to make and easy to adulterate for a profit.) LE West was cited, along with John Boekholder as salesman, for their brand, Grandma's, which was listed as "misbranded and below standard." A fire destroyed the third floor of his factory in 1920. A stove spark was blamed for igniting the lacquer used to paint pencils, yet another line of products marked by the West company.



The chewing gum made by West included names that today would be socially unacceptable. Brands included Black Joe, White Sue, Cherry Ripe, A Pleasant Smile Cream Gum, and West's Cream Pepsin Gum. In keeping with West's





penchant for songwriting, White Sue and others were advertised with songs and sheet music. So strong was LE West's involvement in music that when, in 1919, the AB

Chase piano company of Chicago (founded in 1875, makers of reproducing pianos - a type of player piano) went into bankruptcy and was reorganized, LE West was named as Secretary of the new company.

The Man With the Hoe

As eclectic as his product line, LE West was a man of many interests and a generous member of his community. We know that in 1906, West donated 5 boxes of chewing gum to the Iowa Pharmaceutical Association's annual meeting. While this could just be an example of good business because a great deal of chewing gum sales occurred in pharmacies, other evidence suggest that West was a truly generous person. An account of the life and work of evangelist and missionary for the African American Church, Jacob Kenoly (written by Colin Charles Smith, 1912), indicates that when a poor black immigrant from Liberia, Peter Dunson, needed funds to immigrate and attend the Southern Christian Institute, it was West with some others, that donated the needed \$150 (the equivalent of over \$3,800 today). This is surprising level of involvement and support given the times and West's own choice of brand names for his chewing gum products.

LE West must have been a bit of a free-thinker. West's name appears in the proceedings of hearings before the Committee on Expenditures in the Post Office (1911). In 1906, the postmaster rejected 26 subscriptions to the "Woman's Magazine" by LE West as being less than the advertised annual fee of 10¢. Why West would subscribe to such a magazine or why he needed 26 subscriptions, is open to conjecture, but there he was supporting a woman's magazine well before women could even vote.

LE West must have had a lifelong interest in gardening. In October of 1894, he wrote to the publication *American Gardening, An Illustrated Journal of Horticulture* asking about the planting of Chestnut trees, and the annual report by the South Dakota

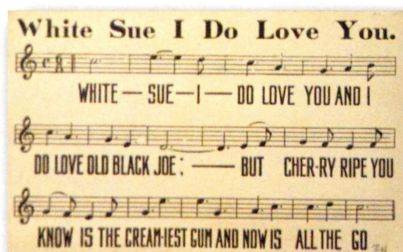
State Horticultural Society, for 1913-4 lists LE West as a member. In his later years, LE West even used his interest in gardening as a theme for a postcard advertising his Chewing Gum brands.

The Traveling Man

"The man with the hoe" must have been a familiar sight for merchants all over the middle and near western United states. LE West loved to travel by train and meet with sales contacts all over the country. As noted before,

these travels began in 1900, with his first business trip to Colorado and Wyoming. A Rock Island Argus Town Crier article on March 24, 1943, featured a story on Mr. West who, at age 89, still hadn't retired and was preparing for his 43rd trip to the West to visit sales contacts. He was still president of the L. E. West Gum Company, but he no longer was a manufacturer and wholesaler of novelties. He did, however, continue to sell calendars, greeting cards, pencils and advertising specialties. By this time, he had lost most of his fortune in land purchases in Kansas and Colorado and had been forced to share his home on Second Avenue with tenants.

Mr. LE West, the man with the hoe, writer of music, and inveterate salesman who would put his name on and sell almost anything, died on May 25, 1945.



Did you ever see "The Man with the Hoe"
Out in the garden where lima beans grow,
Out where tomatoes grow luscious and red
And radishes too in their meek, lowly bed,
Out where the lilies grow fragrant and white.
Pansies and daisies with colors so bright,
If you've not seen him or been at his place,
Just turn this card over and you'll see his face.
Don't forget that he sells

Calendars, Lead Pencils, Fans, Advertising
Novelties, Blotters, Printed Stationery
Post Cards, Greeting Cards as well as
Black Joe, White Sue and
Cherry Ripe Cream Gum *L.E. West*
ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS

Post Card
This space for address only

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Tales of the Hunt

Hosted by Jack Freund

This "tale" was sent in by [Bill Berning](#) (you probably know him as the "scale guy". He has had the same booth at the Chicagoland Show since it came to St. Charles, IL. over 25 years ago). He has found many hundreds of scales and this is just one of many "tales" he could tell.



Let's call this Tale: GOOD-BY WINTER... HURRY UP SPRING



In 1982 I bought some Watling scale dies and patterns from John Caler. He also had the sales records from the Watling Company with each customer's name, address and what they bought. Each customer's name and address was typed or hand written on a 3" x 5" card. We took these old names and mailed thousands of flyers to each of these original Watling customers. He sent his wanted flyer for slot machines and parts and I sent mine for penny scales and

parts. We each bought many tons of our respective machines. One of these cards was a customer looking for keys for his old Watling scale in 1969. The reply from Watling was no keys were available because the scale had not been produced for 30 years. Since the man was local and had both his home and work phone numbers on the back of the card, I decided to call him. He said he still had the old scale in his garage and he would be interested in selling it but there was so much snow in front of his garage door he was not going to try to get the scale out. He decided it would be best for me to call him the next spring and he would sell me the scale. As soon as the snow melted I called him and agreed to meet him first thing the next morning. When I arrived the next day he opened the old garage door to reveal an early cast iron Watling lollipop scale. The original white paint with gold trim had been repainted green. It was rusty and dirty but was complete and almost working. We agreed on his price of \$80 and I took the scale home. I have since restored the scale and repainted it to its original white and gold color.

[REDACTED], Jerry	[REDACTED] St. Chicago, Ill. 60647
6/25/69 con.tel. con. other day, enc.pic.of big head scale, if your scale is not like this, can't do anything for you. doubt if can get keys because haven't built scl. in 30 years.	

This card is the record Watling kept on the customer looking for the key to an old scale. In 1969 the scale was closer to being 60 years old not the estimated 30 years old.

The picture of the 3X5 card with info on it is just one of many, many 3X5 cards that Bill used to locate the vast amount of scales that were still in the original owners possession. If this scale isn't the most beautiful of all those he found, it has to be near the top.

Now it's YOUR turn. send your "Tale" to Jack Freund, PO Box 4, Springfield WI or e-mail it to jbgum@msn.com

FROM MISSION IMPOSSIBLE TO MERELY IMPROBABLE

Imagine for a minute that you are a British coin-op manufacturer in early 20th Century England. You work in a small shop with mostly hand-operated tools. Your materials are often cast-off pieces from games of other manufacturers that have lost their customer appeal. Much of your mechanism will be handmade and individually fitted to the work in progress. Most if not all of your creations will number less than one hundred for a production run. The concept of mass production is unheard of. Every game is unique due to the large amount of hand labor that goes into each machine. And those are just some of the production challenges. Added on top are the laws that seem intended to restrict your industry out of existence. Any game that smacks of gambling is subject to confiscation by the local constabulary. There are no clear-cut guidelines between the permissible games that are “for amusement only” and those that will be found to be illegal “games of chance.”

You launch your game into the marketplace and hope for the best, knowing that the public secretly loves games that reward a lucky player. Games “for amusement only” are for children. You want to pull money from the source: adult players. What do you do?

One answer is [Photo A](#), the “Phoenix,” circa 1910. For provenance, I am relying on an almost identical machine that was sold in the Costa-Haskell collection auction by Christie’s house in 2006. The only differences between their machine and mine are coin-play (Costa-Haskell is 1/2 penny, mine is the 1D penny;) door shape, (Costa-Haskell has a rounded top cutout whereas mine is 90 degrees,) and my game has been recased. Other than those minor differences, the games are identical.

The game is a ball catcher. The concept is the same as the clown game “Bajazzo.” But with a twist. Bajazzo gives the player one ball per coin. If the player successfully catches the ball in the clown’s hat, they may then activate the payout mechanism and receive their prize, usually money or a token redeemable for prize or money.



Photo A

With “Phoenix,” the bar is raised to an almost impossible level. For your coin, you receive four balls that you introduce onto the top of the playfield, one at a time. Using the movable shield, you must catch each ball as it falls through the pinfield. As each ball is captured, it falls into the reserve slot shown as the vertical slot at the bottom center of the playfield. Three balls fill up this reserve cache and the fourth ball caught diverts to the mechanism that allows for activation of the payout knob. The payout, by the way, is one coin. You are playing to win back the coin required to play the game. Since there is no manner in which players may increase their wealth with this game, it’s a safe bet that “Phoenix” passed the “amusement only” test with flying colors.

The problem lies not with the law but with the play challenge. In order to get back your penny, you must catch all four balls! Catching one ball is difficult; catching all four is nigh on impossible. To make matters worse, the knob controlling the movement of the catching shield is backwards to the operation of all clown games. Think of it as driving a car where turning the steering wheel to the right causes the car to veer left. The player must ignore instinct and master the motion opposite to all other catcher games.

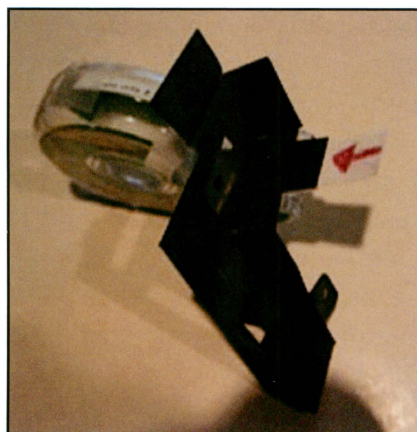


Photo B

do so, he changed the game from a four ball challenge to a one ball version. [Photo B](#) shows the clever modification, highlighted by the arrow pointing to the small metal arm soldered onto the top of the reserve ball trap. Any ball caught bypasses the reserve slot and diverts directly to the payout mechanism allowing for return of the player’s coin.

I think it safe to say that “Phoenix” was doomed from the start. Which is not to say that it remained a loser for all it’s commercial life. Once in the arena, some enterprising operator modified the game to a more acceptable level of difficulty. To

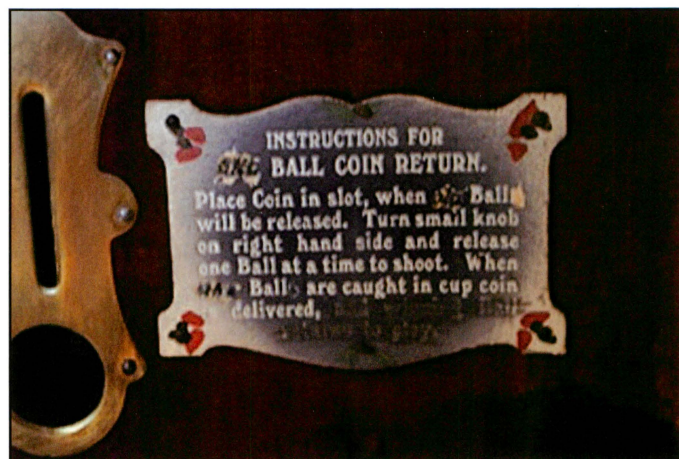


Photo C

Changing the play necessitated changing the play card. [Photo C](#) is the new “improved” rules. They state: “INSTRUCTIONS FOR ONE BALL COIN RETURN. Place Coin in slot, when Ball will be released. Turn small knob on right hand side and release one Ball at a time to shoot. When one Ball are caught in cup coin is delivered.” Switching from plural to singular will get you every time, right? I’m just happy they didn’t butcher the card any more than they did. Here is how the original instructions read: “INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOUR BALL COIN RETURN. Place Coin in slot, when four balls will be released. Turn small knob on right hand side and release one Ball at a time to shoot. When four balls are caught in cup coin is delivered and winning Ball is returned for play.” What the card neglects to say is that catching the “winning Ball” a second time delivers nothing. Only one coin is trapped and available for payout. Once payout has been made, the bank is empty. Should you catch any successive balls after the first four in a row, you will have only the satisfaction of knowing that your skills are superior to all other punters

Necessity is the mother of invention. Stated a different way, four balls are not always better than one. My “Phoenix” has now risen from the ashes. Restored to her former glory and sporting the ever-popular showman’s paint, she is once again stealing pennies from children and making grown men weep. Step right up, folks, and take a flight on the Phoenix. You have nothing to lose but your innocence...and a penny.

THE END

COIN-OP COLLECTIBLES SPAWN RENO LANDMARK

by Marshall Fey

Unorthodox would be the best way to describe the museum-like atmosphere of Reno's former Liberty Belle Saloon & Restaurant. Even more unusual is that the business was named for a slot machine. The owners, Marshall & Franklin Fey, were grandson's of the first slot's inventor, Charles Fey. A German immigrant who patriotically dubbed his invention the Liberty Bell after the famous American symbol of freedom. A year after opening the business an "e" was added on the bell, thus adopting an agnomen popular with early western saloons.

GENESIS OF THE LIBERTY BELLE COLLECTION

In 1995, as a side venture, Marsh and Frank, along with a third brother and a friend, decide to create a casual drinking tavern for the younger crowd. It operated as a beer-only bar located in San Mateo, California, and we named her the Swinging Door, for the entry popular in movies depicting old west saloons. It was a fun place with the imbibing patrons pumping a player piano and singing along with the words inscribed on the rolls of the old time songs. A low budget remodel of a former young girls dance studio, it was furnished with old chairs (25 cents each), discarded tables (\$1.00), and outdated light fixtures all obtained from second hand stores. A little paint, burlap bags on the ceiling, peanut shells on the floor, and a self-constructed bar completed the informal ambiance.

Being bachelors into their late twenties, Marsh and Frank, were able to financially make many antique additions to the popular beer parlor and began starting to accumulate coin-operated collectibles—this became the birth of the Liberty Belle Collection. These additions included a refurbished 1946 Wurlitzer Colonial Model 108, purchased for \$250 (78-rpm jukeboxes were fast becoming obsolete); another \$250 “great find” was a 24 cylinder Edison Multiphone along with a number of other coveted pieces. To assist us at the Swinging Door our father donated a pair of very desirable and unique attractions that we could operate. One was a 1920 Mills Violano Virtuoso (purchased new in 1922, operated in his arcade and then stored in his shop after the violin was stolen from it) and the other a 1905 Mills Auto Stereoscope. We placed the latter machine, featuring the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake photos, in front of the bar to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of this historic event. Collecting coin-op music had not yet become popular, so we were able to purchase a Nelson-Wiggins Orchestration and Seeburg and National pianos, all in the \$200 range. The Swinging Door, the “in place” for young patrons, proved to be more fun than fortune, but it created an insatiable appetite for collecting and a valuable experience for setting up and running a similar business. As a bonus the Swinging Door also provided the brothers with two pretty, young brides.

OUR SOURCE OF INCOME ENDS

While the Swinging door was a side fling, the brothers worked full time for their father, Edmund Sr., a concessionaire at Playland-at-the-Beach in San Francisco and owner and operator of the coin-operated amusements machines there. The elder Fey had started his business there in 1920 by placing arcade machines around the Merry-Go-Round when the amusement park was in its infancy. Thirty-eight years later his friend and long time owner of the park, George Whitney, died. Whitney's son and son-in-law, wishing to control all of Playland's revenue, terminated all leases for the numerous concessionaires. Suddenly, we were out of gainful employment.

A CHANGE OF CAREER BECOMES MANDATORY

Armed with the operation experience of the beer bar and the unique collection of machines we had acquired after three years at the Swinging Door we felt a good future might be to open a combination bar and museum, especially since we had access to our grandfather's original Liberty Bell slot. This would be the focal point of

our envisioned business venture. We had often thought we would like to display the machine at the Swinging Door, but we couldn't capitalize on this attraction in California due to past Governor Earl Warren. In 1950, he championed a state law creating a \$500 fine for each slot machine in a person's possession, plus their confiscation. In contrast, Nevada was the last and only state in 1958 that allowed ownership and furthermore legalized the operation of these devices. If we are going to capitalize on the original Liberty Bell slot WE MUST MOVE TO NEVADA!

ONCE COMMITTED WE NEEDED MORE MEMORABILIA TO MAKE IT A MUSEUM

At the same time we were opening as a saloon and museum, our dad, was simultaneously closing his four-decade old coin-operated machine business. He had a large, two-story shop where he invented, repaired and stored numerous very early and desirable arcade collectibles. From this gold mine of stored antique classics we were able to obtain more coin-operated machines, including a 1905 Roovers Educated Donkey, a 1908 Caille Uncle Sam Strength Tester, a cast iron 1909 American Biographic Clam Shell Mutoscope, a 1928 German Rooster and Hen Egg Vender, and there was the kids favorite, a 1926 Caille Fortune Ball Gum Vender.

THE VENTURESOME MOVE

To finance our new enterprise, Frank and I each sold our residence realizing an equity of \$13,000. Then came the challenge of transporting two households of furnishings and all the museum pieces. I contacted a moving company and they gave an affordable bid to move our household goods, but a ridiculous high price to move the extremely hefty collection. Making the move a little more arduous, we had acquired a second, extremely heavy, Mills Violano Virtuoso for \$100 (shortly after arriving in Reno we traded the machine (selling today for about \$40,000) for a new 4-reel Pace slot. We have felt this was a good move for the revenue earned from this popular slot helped save us from possible bankruptcy. The best affordable solution was to have the moving company transport our furniture and move the weighty museum pieces by renting U-Haul open-box trailers and tow the museum pieces ourselves. The heavy and bulky loads required three slow, tiresome journeys over the Sierra Nevada Mountains on old Highway 40.

THE FINAL FAREWELL

On September 10, 1958, after waving goodbye to friends and relatives, I was off with my young family and the second trailer-load headed for Reno to start a new life, I was accompanied by Shirley, my bride of only eighteen-months along with our eight month-old son, Augie, who was slumbering in a bassinet placed on the back seat of our seven year old Ford Crown Victoria (recently purchased for \$150). After crawling down from the steep, curvy Sierra Nevada mountain on the old road with the overloaded trailer, we proceeded to Donner Lake. Here, a little past midnight, one of the tires on the rented two-wheel trailer went flat. Forced to stop, I detached the trailer from the car, jacked it up and removed the wheel. Along with my wife and baby, I drove on to Truckee to have the tire repaired. I could not leave my young family standing alongside the trailer in the middle of the night. Instead, I would have to abandon the trailer, containing one third of the items essential to our business, and leave it unguarded. Fortunately, when we returned to the trailer, crammed with "goodies," nothing had been touched. To the average person passing by, the piled-high contents of the deserted trailer must have looked like it belonged to the local junk dealer.

After the long tire delay and completing the remainder of a very tiresome journey we finally arrived at our newly rented house in Reno during the early morning hours. To our dismay we found our furniture had not yet arrived and the three of us slept on the floor without the benefit of bedding. This proved to be a climactic beginning before attempting an unknown future.

Frank, leaving his fiancée in California, arrived the following day with the final trailer load of our collection. As there was no U-Haul trailer depot in Reno at that time, we placed one trailer in the other and Frank towed the two back over the mountain to San Mateo.

continued...

THE FEY'S BACK OPERATING SLOTS AFTER A FOURTEEN YEAR EXODUS

Luckily, four 1949 Mills Hi-Tops slots as well as a blackjack table, so we applied to the Nevada Gaming Commission for one table game along with a slot machines license. Frank had a penchant for playing Black Jack and an imprudent desire for dealing the same.

The Gaming Commission granted a Restricted Slot License (15 or less machines), but, fortunately, they turned down the Black Jack request due to lack of any dealing experience. The granting of the slot license would mark the beginning of nearly five decades of the lucrative operation of grandpa's invention.

To show off the Liberty Bell slot, our centerpiece, we encased it prominently next to the front door. Nearby, a case was constructed that displayed a number of newspaper and magazine articles that supported our claim that grandpa, Charlie Fey, was the inventor of the first slot machine.

We hadn't been in town less than a couple weeks when the Reno Evening Gazette ran a photo of a visitor from Chicago who was staying at the Riverside Hotel. The caption stated that she was the niece of Herbert Mills, the "inventor" of the slot machine. We could not let this pass, as we were building our the business around the fact that we would not only have the first slot machine on display, but also that we were the grandsons of the inventor. We grabbed the Liberty Bell slot, along with the supporting literature, and hurried down to the local newspaper. We met with a feature columnist, who interviewed and photographed us with the first machine. In his weekly column, headlined, "Brothers Fey Take Issue On Slot Machine Origin," he ran the photo of the two with the first slot, along with information supporting our claim. (Ironically, it was the lady's uncle, Herbert Mills who stole a Fey Liberty Bell and began reproducing a replica that he blatantly named the Mills Liberty Bell. He mass produced the Fey invention and would become the major manufacturer of these slots for five decades. Our grandfather had no legal recourse for infringement: There were two federal court cases in San Francisco in 1897 in which the Judge ruled that slot machines could not be patented for they were not useful devices and could only be used for gambling.)

OPERATING TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY SLOTS

While still in the process of opening and having a small bank balance, we purchased a quarter 1907 Caille Centaur for \$175 and a nickel 1904 Caille Peerless Roulette for \$100, which proved to be the epitome of antique slot machine collectibles. We licensed this 7-coin mechanical marvel for gaming in the first years of our operation and it did quite well. Also licensed was the Centaur that seemed to have minimal player appeal. Luckily, the Nevada Gaming Commission, nor myself—not familiar with the mechanism—did not realize it was loaded with illegal "bugs." For this was the only gaming machine of this genre operating in northern Nevada at that time.

We had over-estimated the earning power of our coveted arcade pieces. Fortunately, the Reno City amusement machine tax in 1958 was only \$1.00 per machine (possibly due to Harold Club's influence while operating the Roaring Camp Collection). In the 1970s the license jumped to \$50 per machine, because of the ridiculous low early tax we generously paid for 20 machine licenses even though we may not have been operating that many. Since most of the amusement machines didn't earn the new \$50 tax, some were destined to spend the rest of their days in the attic.

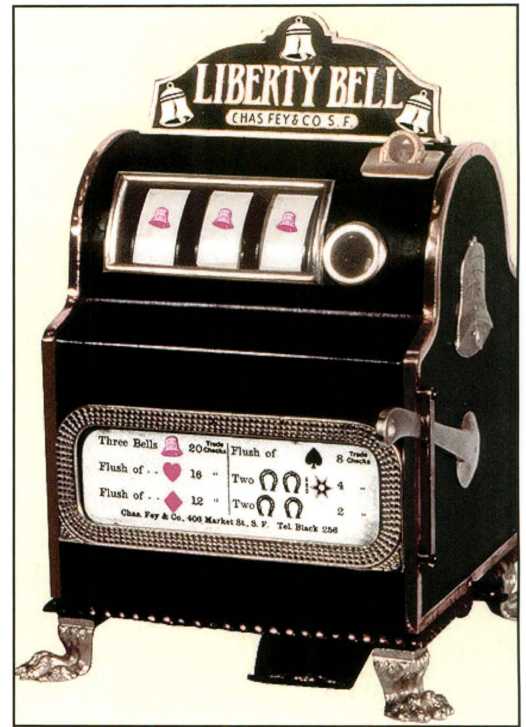
Looking back Frank and I could never have hoped to find a better site or better timing for establishing our chancy enterprise. We fortunately located on prime property on Virginia Street, Reno's main north south artery, that we were able to purchase three years after we opened for \$3,000 down on a Contract of Sale. A major bonus was that we not only operated our coin-op amusement collectibles, but were also able to maintain a lucrative slot machine operation. A huge perk was that Reno proved to be a gold mine for numerous, very affordable, out-dated slots—especially Fey machines—that led to the rapid growth and eminence of the internationally famous Liberty Belle Collection. Coupled with "Slot Machines, America's Favorite Gaming Device," the Liberty Belle became the primary source for slot machine history. The slot collection appeared on the NBC Today Show, Discovery and History Channels, Japanese, German and Swedish TV plus numerous other media outlets worldwide.



Grandpa: Charles Fey, 1862-1944, made many different machines. The 28 that were in the Liberty Belle Collection are now displayed in the Nevada State Museum.



Jennings: The Fey Brothers' first slot was a 1931 Jennings, purchased for home use, while living in California. It was broken up a year later when a close friend's house was raided and he was fined \$2000 for the possession of four slots.



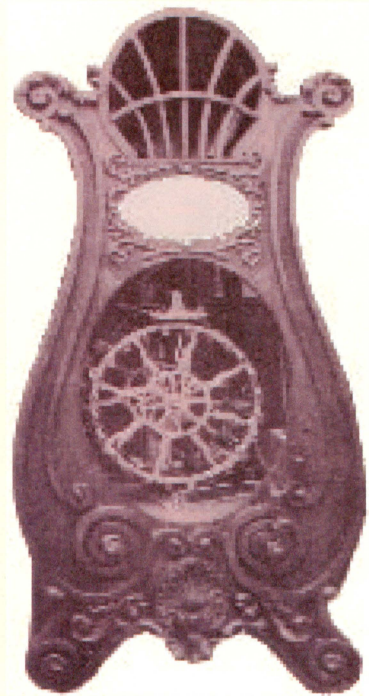
Liberty Bell Fey: A primary reason to move to Nevada was to be able to publicly display grandpa's original Liberty Bell slot—and as a bonus—operate its descendents.



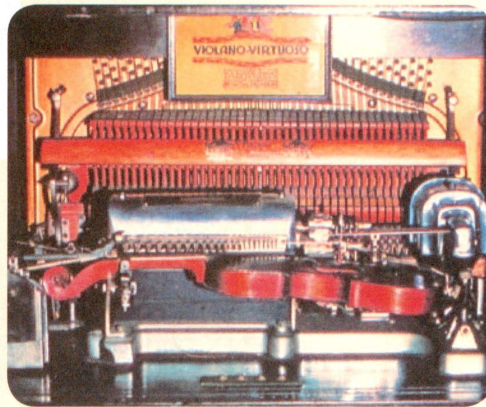
Backbooth: Slot machines decorated the restaurant throughout. Purchased in the 1960s for \$200, the New Century Detroit was found in Wisconsin through an Antique Trader ad, and the Mills Twin Dewey was obtained from Bikins for \$375—the delinquent storage fee.



Mills Slot: The four Mills Hi-Tops—revamped for casino use—came with the lease of the Liberty Belle. It was the beginning of forty-eight years of operating and revamping slot machines.



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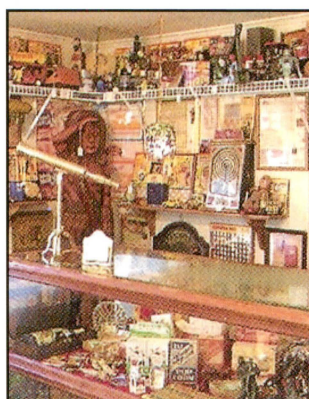
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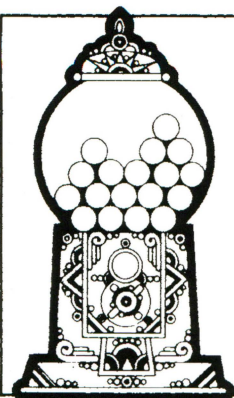
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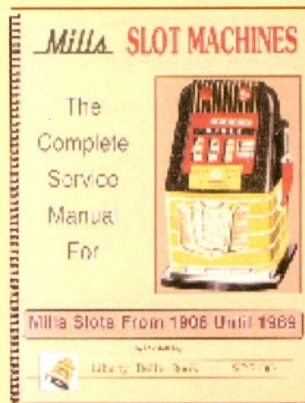
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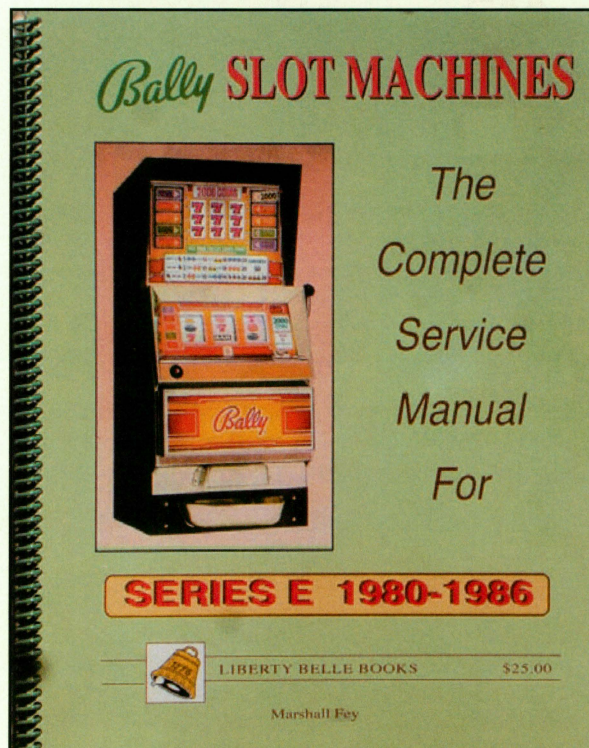
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